

Phippsburg Congregational Church
On Gun Hill near Kennebec River
Phippsburg Vicinity
(Phippsburg Center)
Sagadahoc County
Maine

HABS No. ME-108

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

PHIPPSBURG CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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Location: On Gun Hill near Kennebec River, Phippsburg Vicinity (Phippsburg Center), Sagadahoc County, Maine

Present Owner and Occupant: Phippsburg Congregational Church

Present Use: Religious activities

Statement of Significance: This atructure was first built in 1802, "new-modeled" with Gothic exterior detailing added when the pews were replaced, the gallery removed, and the entry relocated. (New windows were added in 1909.) Architecturally, the Phippsburg Congregational Church is of interest because of the few superficial Gothic details added to the standard early nineteenth-century New England church type, and because of the interior which has not been extensively remodeled--as so many others have--and which is particularly beautiful because of its simplicity and proportions. It is a good example of the local vernacular (certainly a more felicitous example than the Harpswell Church), and is a statement in a rural community of a more sophisticated handling in an urban setting; e.g., Winter Street Congregational Church in Bath. [Source of information, Mrs. Fred Haggett (Ada Catherine Minott Haggett), who is familiar with church records.]

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. Condition of Fabric: Good, yet the fabric suffers because of its seasonal usage.
- B. Technical Description of Exterior
1. A rectangular wood frame building with gable roof, spiral bell tower, and spire; two entrances at tower end of building into narthex. The frontispieces and spire are of interest. Over-all dimensions, 38'-8", facing south, x 60'-10".
 2. Foundations: Exterior foundation walls of semidressed rubble and rag work. Miscellaneous wooden posts, hewn beams, aawed joists, wooden board subfloor. Fragments of a brick foundation or wall under building.
 3. Wall construction: Wood frame. Clapboards over 1" sheathing, inside plaster on lath between studs. Corners are decorated with long, simple wooden pilasters.

4. Stoops: Stone slab stoop with iron boot scrapers at each entrance.
5. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys at altar end of sanctuary, one thimble for smoke pipe from wood-burning iron stove at rear of sanctuary.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways: Two doorways on facade; plain pilasters continued over the doors to form pointed arches which terminate in simple tripartite "crowns."
 - b. Windows and shutters: 1847 windows (double-hung wooden sash, twenty-over-twenty lights, clear glass) replaced in 1909 with present windows, which are double-hung wooden sash with stained glass. (Lower sash, one pane with twenty-four surrounds; upper sash four large panes with a circular insert, and twenty-four surrounding panes.) One square window, twelve lights set into semicircular decoration in rear gable.
Louvered wood shutters hung at several of the rectangular windows.
7. Roof: Gable roof, composition shingles on wood sheathing. Boxed eaves with simple cornice. Entablature composed of three lapped boards 7 3/4", 11 3/4", 16 5/8" in width.
8. Bell tower and spire: Two-tier square bell tower, clapboards with pilaster corner boards, entablature of three lapped boards, wooden cornices; open bell housing; paneled wooden spire (square in plan) with wooden weathervane; wooden obelisks at each corner of tower at both tiers. Wood frame, mortise and tenon with peg fasteners. Hand-hewn wood beams.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plan: Narthex opens through two doorways into sanctuary, two stairways to balcony over narthex, two closets. Two aisles to chancel. Pews on platforms, raised above aisle level. Chancel extends across sanctuary.
2. Stairways: Two stairways to balcony; L-shaped with winders at turn.
3. Flooring: Wooden board flooring painted yellow ochre.
4. Walls and ceiling finish: Vertical beaded edge board wainscot. Plastered wall, wood mold strip decoration to suggest panels. Wooden board cornice. Coved plaster

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- ceiling, with stepped recess and plaster centerpiece.
(Walls painted yellow prior to 1947.)
5. Doorways and doors: Simple door frame with bead trim, cut to suggest pediment. Four-panel door, one per opening.
 6. Decorative features and trim: Chancel railing with turned balusters. Pews painted white with varnished trim, brass numbers.
 7. Hardware: Miscellaneous iron thumb latches, iron boot scrapers.
 8. Lighting: Oil lamps converted to electric. Bracket lamps and six-lamp chandelier at center of room.
 9. Heating: One wood-burning iron stove, Budswater & Co., 1880, Rounsford, Pa. #34.
- D. Site: Situated on Gun Hill overlooking Kennebec River near McCobb-Minott House and Hon. Mark L. Hill's grave. Faces south.

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